

Kenepuru & Central Sounds



Kenepuru & Central Sounds Residents Association Inc.

Manager, Resource Consents Marlborough District Council

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16 Apr 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association

Submission on Resource Consent Application U150184

Marlborough Aquaculture Limited – Deep Bay, Admiralty Bay

I write in my capacity as President of the Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association Inc.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Association was established in 1991 and currently has approximately 200 household members whose residents live full time or part time in the Kenepuru and Pelorus Sounds. The Association's objects include, among others, to coordinate dealings with central and local government and promote the interests of residents of Kenepuru Sound and adjacent areas and to promote and act in the best interests of residents, ratepayers and persons associated with the Kenepuru and Central Sounds area. AGMs of the Association are well attended.
- 1.2 The Association is concerned at the level of mussel farming that is being undertaken in the Sounds area and at the potentially serious cumulative impacts that this is having. The Association is further concerned that notwithstanding this applications for yet more mussel farming activity continue to be made. The Association notes that whilst this application is a little north of our customary area of interest, we are cognizant that

Kenepuru & Central Sounds Residents Association Inc.

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it is connected with the Sounds and the application is particularly concerning in that recent research has shown this is an important long-term habitat area for the Dusky Dolphin for which the applicant seems to have little regard. On this basis alone our submission falls within the objects of the Association.

2. Decline application

- 2.1 The Association submits that the activity as applied for will have more than minor adverse ecological, natural character, landscape, visual amenity, recreational amenity, and navigational impacts, including taken cumulatively with the impacts of other marine farming activity already being undertaken in the immediate area. As such the application must be **declined**.

3. Request to Appear

- 3.1 The Association confirms that it would like to present/talk to this submission at the public hearing.

4. The Association's Concerns - General

- 4.1 As with other applications for resource consents in the area, a common theme in this application is the existing level of modification of the area by marine farming. The proposed additional area is portrayed as a small addition to the existing consented situation, which is so minor that any associated effects cannot be more than minor.
- 4.2 With respect, we have grave concerns about any analysis which is based on the concept that additional areas of marine farm activities, approved over time, become a smaller and smaller addition to the total already allocated and consequently adverse effects can be dismissed because of the extent of modification of the existing environment.
- 4.3 We consider that the countermanding analysis should apply. This is that there will be cumulative effects arising from any existing activity such that any further activity may be inappropriate development. In this regard, we note the Council's AEE assessment which echoes this concern about allowing an extension to a farm in the "already heavily industrialised area".
- 4.4 There is the suggestion in the application that the area is an extensively farmed area that can therefore be treated somewhat dismissively in contrast to other parts of the Sounds where recreational activities have been treated preferentially. There is no basis for such an approach, and the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan ('MSRMP') certainly does not make such an assumption.
- 4.5 The "farmed area" concepts as expressed by the applicant seems to seek to justify further marine farming area on the basis of some form of diminishing cumulative effect. We do not accept this as a valid approach. However, we do acknowledge that a high level of marine farming has been consented in this area, resulting in a situation where cumulative adverse ecological effects are likely to already be

occurring, and where cumulative adverse effects on landscape, natural character, visual amenity and recreational amenity are occurring.

5. Specific Concerns

- 5.1 The applicant's assessment of ecological impacts considers only benthic issues and even then fails to consider the cumulative benthic impact of mussel farming activity in the wider area. No assessment is made of cumulative water column impacts from the existing level of activity in the Admiralty Bay area. There is sufficient concern on this basis alone to warrant a precautionary approach being taken and the application declined.
- 5.2 Moreover, the Association understands that the area has been identified as of importance in terms of providing significant feeding and recreational habitat for the much loved and valued Dusky Dolphin. The applicant's application does not canvass this very important issue in any depth but dismisses the significance of this area in this regard in a sentence or two. **This is not acceptable.** In this regard, we understand that there is a long and complicated history of appeals in relation to applications concerning extensions to many other mussel farms in the area. The application should be declined on this basis.

6. The Associations' Position

- 6.1 As recorded, the Association submits that the application must be **declined**.
- 6.2 Failing that, we note that the applicant is effectively seeking a new term of twenty years for the existing farm **and** the proposed new area. We submit that any term should be restricted to either 2020 (in line with the existing farm) or 31 December 2024 to align with other marine farms in the area under section 123A(2) of the Resource Management Act 1991 ('RMA'). This will enable an assessment of an overall appropriate level of aquaculture for the local area to be undertaken. Section 165ZF of the RMA specifically contemplates this approach where it would be more efficient and would enable better assessment and management of cumulative effects.

Yours faithfully


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